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THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



Volume VIII • Number 9



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Volume VIII, Number 9 August 1990

William E. Olson, Editor • 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235

Club News



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME



I hope most of you remember that all Club memberships expire on August 31. (Why this is so is too long a story to repeat.) Those whose memberships expire this month will receive shortly (or have already received) a separately-mailed notice. Last year I had to send out quite a few Second Notices, which is a bother and costs money, so I urge all of you who wish to remain in the Club to pay up promptly. Sending all this stuff out and keeping track of it all is not the enjoyable part of running the Club, and keeping it to a minimum amount of work for me improves my disposition and my digestion.

While the Club will end its "fiscal year" with money in the bank, a considerable portion of this must be allocated to continuing the memberships of those who signed up for more than one year. Having reviewed expenses for the previous 12 months, and anticipating a major increase in postage rates scheduled to take effect in February 1991, I have reluctantly concluded that dues must be raised. In fact, during the 12-month period August 1, 1989 to July 31, 1990, the Club's expenses exceeded its income by nearly \$2,000. (Postage, about \$4300; printing, about \$8900; envelopes, supplies and miscellaneous about \$700; total amount \$13,900. Income from dues, advertising, and the "Rick Wilson" fund — see last issue — was about \$12,100.) That we still have about \$4000 in the bank is a consequence, not of my having overcharged you before, but rather of the benefits of multi-year memberships. Those who pay for two or three years contribute a financial cushion of working capital, in return for which they receive a discount, and protection against future increases for the period of their memberships. However, these people must receive what they have paid for. Even if we assume that multi-year memberships, and thus the working capital contributions, will continue at about the same rate as in the past, the Club needs to have at least \$3,000 on hand now to take care of the people who have already paid for the years ending August 31, 1991 and 1992. So the \$4,000 is not the comfortable cushion that at first blush it might seem.

Printing costs averaged about \$928 per Torque Tube issue over the past nine issues. Each U.S. copy costs 85¢ to mail. Assuming that the membership averaged 375 during that period, we get about \$3.33 per issue per member, or \$29.97 per nine-issue year. This suggests that the U.S. dues should have been around \$30 instead of \$28. That explains



Founded by Dave Lewis in 1980





COVERS



OLD AND NEW. E. A. ("Gene") Slusser (#5), now retired after selling a successful electronics business several years ago, divides his time between New Hampshire, Nantucket Island, and Florida. When in New Hampshire, Gene and his wife enjoy their beautiful dark blue '37 Century convertible. When they want to get to one of the other places, they hop in Gene's Panther. The latter is a hotted-up, re-engined Piper Navajo with four-blade props. Unlike the vintage Stearmans pictured with Paul Culp's *Centruy* several issues back, the Panther is considerably faster than the car: 280 mph at cruising altitude (24,000 feet).

* * *

No one seems to be rising to the bait of my "mystery" questions. Last month's produced no response at all. In case any of you give a damn, the mystery picture in the last issue shows the Brown Derby restaurant in Los Angeles. The car approaching the intersection is a 1937 LaSalle. This month's mystery may be a bit more interesting. What is wrong with this Fisher Body ad?

part of the deficit (about \$700-\$800), too much spent for "miscellaneous", which includes a loss of maybe \$500 on the 1989 Eastern Club Meet, explains some more, and the rest may be attributed to my not being much of a number-cruncher.

In any event, let us assume that at present \$30 per U.S. member is about right. The printer tells me that he has absorbed three paper cost increases in the past 18 months, and will need to increase his price by 5% in the near future. That is \$40-\$50 per issue, which adds about \$1.00 per member per year. (He is still below his competition at the increased price.) In addition, the Postal Service has scheduled a major increase in rates for February of 1991; if this takes effect as scheduled — and I must assume that it will — the cost of mailing each U.S. issue will go from 85¢ to about \$1.05 for five of the nine Vol. IX issues, or an average of 96¢. This adds another \$1.00.

I have not included printing and mailing the Roster in the foregoing analysis. The cost of this should be covered by revenue from commercial ads and bank account interest, which has likewise been excluded from the analysis. Last March, the 1990 Roster cost about \$800 to print and mail, and ad revenues plus interest have run about \$1100 per 12 months. As of this writing, I have not decided whether to increase commercial ad rates; I think they have been the same ever since Dave Lewis started the Club in 1980, so no business advertiser has much ground for complaint if they go up. At present, what is paid for a full-page ad is only slightly more than the cost of printing the page. This reflects the Club's traditional theory that the ads are there to inform the members about good products, not to make any significant amount of money.

The foregoing analysis suggests that the 1990-91 U.S. dues should be at least \$32.00, and that is what they will be. I regret that it is necessary to jump 14% in one year, but I daresay you can all afford it. (Anyone who cannot is in the wrong hobby.) In considering this, it is worthwhile to recall that when the Club started in 1980, the dues for first class mailing were \$26.00, and that they have been raised only once in the interim. So we have gone about 23% since 1980. During the last decade the U.S. Consumer Price Index has risen over 30% and the Auto Parts Index probably well over 50%, and the "sticker" price of a new Buick LeSabre has gone from maybe \$8,000 to around \$18,000. Moreover, to my mind you're getting more for your money than ever, and any member who can't get \$32 worth of good advice and \$32 worth of entertainment out of nine Torque Tube issues is missing the boat somewhere.

I have applied some crystal-ball-gazing in determining the dues levels for overseas members, because I have no idea what the 1991 postage rates for them will be, and the Post Office does not seem to know either. Overseas members may wish to renew for more than one year to minimize the necessity for going to the bank to have U.S. dollar checks prepared, and deserve some kind of a "break" in any case. So, I have discounted the price of multi-year memberships for them a bit more than for U.S. members.

A few people renewed at the old rate during the past month, despite my pleas in past years that no one renew until he gets a notice. These members got a little deal, and will not be asked for another four dollars. They are, however, expected to recognize their good fortune by contributing something printable during the next 12 months.

H. J. Glass (#111) once said he liked this publication because it carried a minimum of, to use his memorable phrase, "social chatter and administrative droning." Unfortunately, a certain amount of droning seems to be necessary, but that is enough of it for now.



FROM RICK WILSON (#539)

A NOTE OF THANKS

Overseeing the "Bill Olson" award project that was covered in the last issue was a good experience for me. Coordinating a project of this type is not very hard to do, but it is very time consuming, and I could not have done it by myself. So I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people who helped me get this thing done.

First there's my wife Patsie, and my daughters Amy and Stephanie who opened mail, counted and sorted money, checked off names, and stuffed envelopes.

Then there's a couple of my co-workers who gave of their free time to lend a hand. John Carter, addressed and stuffed envelopes. And Rich Linville, typed the original letter and helped design the plaque. Lastly but certainly not least, I want to thank all of you who responded to the opportunity to recognize our loquacious Editor. Truly without your help we could not have done it. Your contributions far exceeded my expectations. Nearly everyone sent in more than the requested one dollar. So the few Knaves who declined to respond were more than compensated for.

I almost did not write to the overseas members because I thought converting the overseas currency to U.S. currency would be too troublesome, plus the cost of mailing overseas would be more than their one dollar contribution. The decision was made to write them and let them decide whether to respond. Like the old saying goes "They came through like true blues." Nearly every overseas member sent a contribution. One guy sent a tattered five dollar bill described as his "last remnant of a 1984 trip to the U.S." Someone else sent a five pound note. I don't know the U.S. conversion, but I substituted a ten dollar bill for it and kept the five pound note as a memento. Not only did we get a good overseas response, we also heard from several people who no longer belong to the Club. I think that says a lot about our Editor and about the type of people we have in this Club.

I sincerely appreciate the support I received from all of you during this project.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Wilson".



Just to show you that Antique Automobile has no monopoly of "grip and grin" pictures, here is the Editor (on the left) receiving the plaque presented on behalf of the membership by Rick Wilson at our "annual meeting" in June. (See the last issue. I probably should have worn a hat, too.)

HELP STAMP OUT BRAIN-PICKING!

There is a phenomenon which has always been with us, and is not unique to antique cars, but which has recently come to aggravate me more and more. This is brain-picking, a form of parasitism, or the getting of something for nothing.

I have received numerous letters over the past few years in which the writers expressed no interest whatever in joining the Club, but rather requested that I answer all sorts of questions and/or send them all sorts of information, free. In no case did any such writer even enclose a SASE. (Sometimes they did not even give their addresses.) My usual response to these inquiries is to send a small information package about the Club, which is easily enough done by stuffing, sealing and stamping an envelope and mailing it. Occasionally, if the writer is overseas or otherwise seems worthy of special sympathy, and his questions can be answered in one page or less, I try to help him out. In nine cases out of ten, I hear no more from these people. They are not interested in joining the Club and paying the modest annual dues (at least I think the dues are modest enough). They want free advice, something for nothing. Many of them are probably annoyed when they don't get it, and dismiss me as a bum or a rip-off artist!

The letter-writers are bad enough, and they cost all of you something, because you have paid for the stamps and the paper I mail to them. Far worse, however, are the telephoners. I do not mind people calling me and asking how to join, unless they overlook time zones and call at 10 PM Pacific Time, which is 1 AM in Ohio. Frequently, however, the callers do not want to know that: like the letter writers, they want to pick my brain, to get something for nothing. Or they want to buy parts from me, and seem greatly annoyed when I tell them I am not a parts dealer, and no, I don't know where they can find some obscure part or other or where they can get a fuel pump rebuilt for under \$10. Some of

them are curiously ignorant; when, for example, I suggest they consult Hemmings Motor News, they ask what it is. These people seem almost invariably to call: (a) during the day when I am not at home, in which event my wife is nice to them because she supposes incorrectly that they are friends of mine; (b) during the dinner hour; or (c) after I have gone to bed (time zones again). As is the case with the letter-writers, only a small fraction of the callers ever join the Club, my suggestions that it would help them to do so notwithstanding.

It is probably just as well that these people do not join the Club, because they would become a burden on all of us, but they are aggravating as hell, and the aggravation is increasing. (In truth, it is aggravating even to write about them, and I am now going out to cool off.)

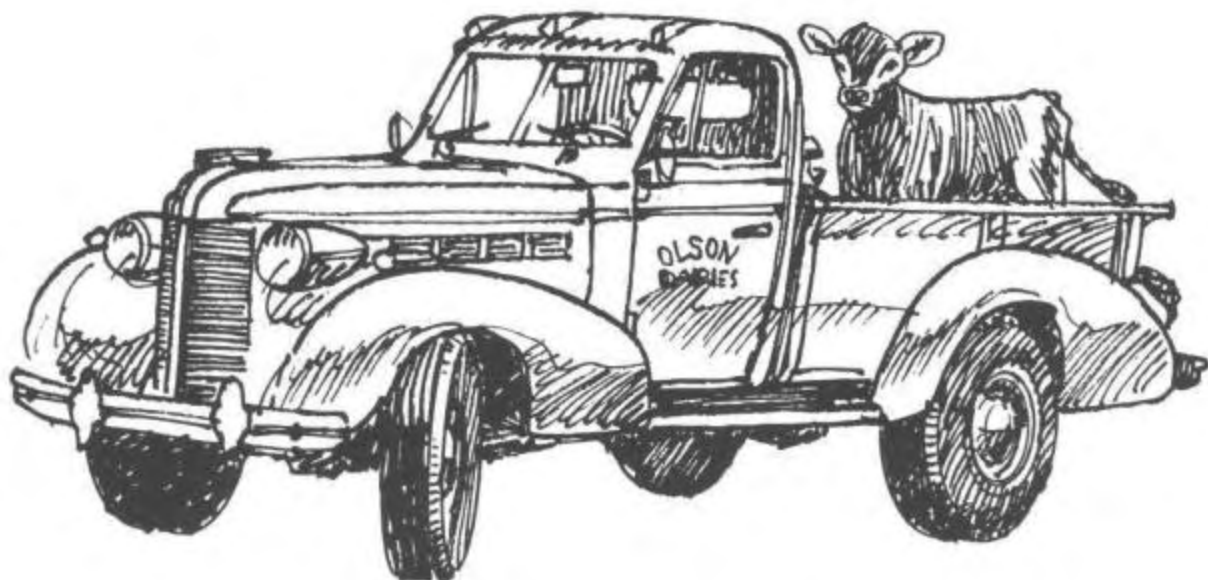
Some time ago, I began asking the callers to tell me from whence or whom my name and phone number came to them. Some decline to say, or are obviously evasive. (I have heard, or put, enough questions in my profession to distinguish bad memory from bullshit.) In many cases, however, it turned out that the brain-picker got my name from one of you. It is easy enough, I know, to put some pest off by telling him to call someone else; I have done it myself, and in most cases later apologized to the put-off-ee. However, it is close to getting out of hand, and my blood pressure is too high.

Perhaps you will say I let this kind of thing trouble me too much, and perhaps you have a point. However, I attempt to conduct my affairs in a courteous and honorable manner, and if at all possible to give more than I ask. Parasitism I find particularly loathsome.

It appears that one firm at least has been equally troubled by the brain-pickers. Unlike the Club, this is a business that specializes in '55-'57 Chevrolet stuff. Apparently it has a telephone number for orders and another for the principals of the firm. If you call the latter, an operator first asks for your credit card number, and when you inquire as to why in hell she wants to know that, you find out that the boss will speak with you for \$150 an hour. The person who told me this was outraged, an attitude I thought was inappropriate, as he wanted to use the free information he hoped to get to make money himself.

Why do the brain-pickers act the way they do? Some of them are just mean-spirited, stingy, ignorant, stupid people, and incorrigably so, the sort with which the world would be better off without. More probably have no conception that they are behaving in a dishonorable fashion, and would be shocked were that accusation to be levelled against them. They are simply used to getting something for nothing, and do not draw any distinction in their minds between a voluntary organization to which the members have contributed for their mutual benefit and a branch of government. If they want to know something, they call the public library, or the Social Security office, or the Attorney General's Consumer Hot-Line, or one of the other myriad offices which modern society has provided to save people from the trouble of having to learn anything on their own. It does not occur to them that any organization, whatever its nature, does not necessarily exist to give them free service.

The work that I have done, and the body of knowledge that the Club has assembled, are the consequences of the contribution, great or small, that each member has made to the Club's resources and to its continued existence. When someone tries to tap that resource without making any contribution of his own, he is in my view trying to steal something from me and from each of you. Besides being aggravating, this is knavish and dishonorable behavior, and ought to be resisted and condemned.



MORE NIKKOGRAPHY: NIKKO SMELLS SMOKE

I have no Outrageous Opinions to offer this time, but we will have some Foolishness instead. As some of you know, long-time member Dug Waggoner (#10) is a commercial artist in Berkeley, California. (A "commercial" artist is one who draws pictures of things people want pictures drawn of, and gets paid by such people for doing that. By contrast, a "fine" artist, like my No. 1 Son Peter, does what he feels like and gets money from his father, or maybe from the Government or Rich Widows.) Several years ago, Dug bought a Japanese drawing pen named "NIKKO." On certain nights, when Venus is at Superior Conjunction with the Crescent Moon, or some other Auspicious Event is taking place, NIKKO draws pictures by himself. Generally these reveal Historical Events long shrouded by the Mists of Time. (Sometimes, however, NIKKO produces work that would excite Jesse Helms or the FBI, and Dug has to burn these the next day.) Many of these drawings, which I call NIKKography, have appeared in these pages: "Das Buick-mit-Beiwagen", the German General Staff's wine-tasting car; Prince Al-Hoon's "Fay-a-Toon"; the Swiss Army's mountain rescue car in which Count Ziebart's nephew met his untimely demise; and several others. Curiously, all of these have featured 1937 or 1938 Buicks, some modified in bizarre ways.

Sometimes these NIKKO drawings illustrate articles from JOOTE, the Journal of Obscure and Trivial Events, one of Dug's favorite publications. On occasion, however, NIKKO will himself write out the facts that go with the picture. (NIKKO can write in Japanese, English, Tagalog and six Polynesian dialects.) That is what happened last May. Dug found the drawing we see here, plus a story claiming that the truck belonged to relatives of mine in Abbotsford, Wisconsin, and that the calf was a sort of town pet there. According to NIKKO, my great-uncle's cousin Sven brought the calf with him every time he came to town in his Buick pickup. People would pet it, feed it ice cream, and generally make a big fuss over it. Sven called it Karl the Kalf or sometimes Knute the Knalf. Every year at Hallowe'en the calf would disappear, only to be found later in the mayor's office, or the Great Northern depot, or some other unlikely place. This went on until Sven and Karl (or Knute) died on the same day, and were buried together after a Fine Funeral. Maybe the truck was buried too; in any event, it was never seen again.

Well, friends, I think Dug has been leaving his window open too often, and NIKKO has inhaled too much of that funny smoke rising from the Berkeley campus of U Cal. For one thing, my relatives never got west of the Alleghenies; so far as I know, I'm the first to have done it. Even if they did, however, and I had a great-uncle's cousin Sven, how could Karl (or Knute) remain a calf (or Kalf) all those years? Calves grow up, and in a year or two they're COWS (or KOWS) or STEERS or BULLS or whatever. Besides, no relation of mine, even a Swede, would be dumb enough to make a nice Buick into a truck. And that's no bull, NIKKO!

— Bill



! SHAKIN' 'EM LOOSE !

A NEW KIDNEY STONE THERAPY By David Paulisin (#704)

The clutch chatter was so bad on my '37 80-C in first and reverse gears that even a short ride would shake loose a good-fitting denture.

On one occasion I had my kids and my 77-year-old father-in-law in the back seat for a Saturday drive. The chatter was extremely potent that day! My father-in-law felt sick, and the kids thought Dad had bought a ride from Cedar Point. The drive was called off when Pop said he would either walk home or throw up in the back seat, neither of which seemed like a good idea.

Later that night Pop complained of severe pain in the lower back and inability to urinate. He spent a lot of time in the bathroom, and we became very concerned when he started yelling. Before we could call the emergency squad, however, Pop emerged from the bathroom with a big smile on his face. He had "passed" a cashew-sized kidney stone! Pop was aware of the stone and had been scheduled for "sonic-bath" treatment, with surgery to follow if the treatment did not dissolve the stone. I guess the urologists figured no one could "pass" a stone that big!

Although it was probably only a coincidence, we could not help but attribute dislodgement of the stone to my clutch chatter. In any event, the doctor thinks it's great and Pop is equally pleased.

I decided that, as Pop's stone was gone, I really ought to address the clutch chatter problem, and have corrected most of it. I found too much oil in the transmission. Oil poured from the side filler plug when I removed it with the car on level ground. Apparently one of my mechanics got carried away, or filled the tranny on its side before it went into the car. A lot of gear oil got into the clutch. Cleaning off the disc and the pressure plate helped quite a bit, and the chatter is now only slight.

I guess a lot of stories have been told about what can happen in the back seat of a Buick, but shaking loose a kidney stone is probably a first.



EDITOR'S NOTE. Wasn't that story a pisser, folks? I loved it. I had a kidney stone once, and those who've had 'em know it's no picnic. Eventually I "passed" mine, too, but it came out in two tiny pieces, and I was amazed that so small an object could cause so much pain, even though it did have a couple of sharp edges on it. Passing one the size of a cashew nut, or even close to it, seems to me a feat calling for special recognition, and Dave's father-in-law is hereby awarded the Editor's Mighty Man of the Year prize. Don't get into any pissing contests with him, Dave, you're gonna lose!



🏞️ HISTORIC HIGHWAYS? 🏞️

A few issues back, in connection with the subject of final-drive ratios, we considered 1930s-style roads, and noted that the "parkway" (i.e. a four-lane limited-access highway with relatively easy curves and grades) was just then coming into existence. For example, the Pennsylvania Turnpike is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. The first such road was the Bronx River Parkway in New York, opened in 1924, and several others in the New York City area followed in the 1930s. The famous Blue Ridge Parkway, which follows the crests of the Appalachian Mountains from Virginia to North Carolina, was also built during the 1930s.

These roads were called "parkways" because, although designed as limited-access highways for relatively speedy travel, they were located in park-like settings, with considerable attention paid to landscaping and the architecture of bridges. Long straight stretches were avoided to provide the motorist with a series of changing vistas. I lived near the Bronx River Parkway as a boy, and remember it well. It was a pretty drive, and the speed limit — 45 mph in some places — about as fast as one could go in the vicinity.

The Merritt Parkway in Connecticut, constructed between 1934 and 1940, was, and is, a prime example of the "parkway." It was intended to relieve congestion on the old Boston Post Road (U.S. 1) which followed the 18th Century "post road" from New York to Boston, and thus went through all the major towns along Long Island Sound and Narragansett Bay. The Parkway's designers, according to the July 1990 Historic Preservation News, "threaded the parkway through a generous 300-foot right-of-way that was lavishly landscaped....Hills, rocky outcroppings and other natural forms were carefully integrated to offer the motorists maximum visual pleasure." The 35 bridges that carry secondary roads over the Parkway were no less carefully thought out. Each is stylistically unique, and the architecture runs from Art Deco to Italian Renaissance.

Except for the addition of federally-mandated modern guard rails, the Merritt is largely unchanged from the way it was built. Now, however, there is a state reconstruction plan that would widen the road from four to eight lanes, obliterating in the process virtually all of the landscaping and most of the bridge architecture. This has historic preservationists greatly concerned, and one can be sure there will be a major flap if Connecticut DOT even comes close to putting the plan into effect. (This potential controversy is discussed at greater length in the Historic Preservation News issue mentioned above. This is a monthly newspaper published by The National Trust for Historic Preservation.)

Can a road be "historic"? Why not? If some buildings ought to be preserved as examples of the taste, style, culture and techniques of another day, as monuments to the skill and vision of their designers, as pieces of the fascinating continuum of human accomplishment, and as opportunities to experience a bit of our forefathers' lives, then why not the great parkways? After all, aren't all those among the reasons why "historical vehicles" are being restored and preserved? The best architecture and the best automobiles from the 1930s are now accepted subjects of preservation. The parkways should be likewise.

As many historic buildings have not survived the urges to "modernize" and to make a buck, so the Merritt and other parkways may not survive the bureaucrats whose life-mission is to continually "improve" things, and the demands of those who think the only function of a building is to keep the rain off, a car to get from one place to another, and a road to provide the means of doing so as quickly as possible with the least expenditure of effort.

Members in Southern New York and Connecticut ought to organize a caravan and "tour" the Merritt Parkway while it's still there.



Following Pages



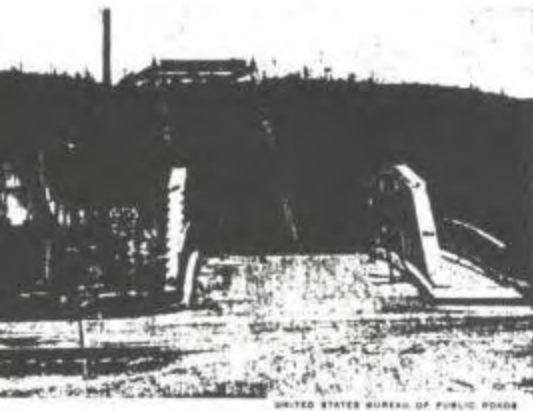
The following article appeared in the August 1938 issue of The Buick Magazine. It's interesting to compare the author's predictions with the actual state of things 50-plus years later. Fifty miles per hour seems to have been considered the maximum safe speed in 1938, and this explains in part why most rear end gear ratios were around 4.5:1. One thing is certain, to my mind: the concluding sentence of Mr. Tom's article is just as good today as it was then. (Article courtesy of Mike Vosganian (#447)).

What you can expect from

*What will motoring be like in 1960?
Not radically different,
says this authority . . . and explains why*

By R. E. TOMS

Chief, Division of Design, Bureau of Public Roads



Left: Roads and bridges which were built for horse-and-buggy traffic are wholly inadequate for present-day motoring

BROAD superhighways from coast to coast. Ultrastreamlined motorcars rushing along at 100 miles an hour. State-to-state trips with scarcely a stop.

Is that your idea of motoring in the future? Then I'm afraid I must disappoint you.

The familiar two-lane highway is here to stay.

In many cases, it must be modernized, of course. And in comparatively few cases it must be replaced by multilane highways. But you won't see any sweeping changes in highway design for years to come—you will soon see why:

The motorist pays for the roads he drives on. He pays an average state gasoline tax of 3.9 cents per gallon—plus federal taxes and, in some localities, county and city taxes. He also pays fees for motor vehicle registration and licensing. The amount of property tax that goes to support roads is negligible.

The motorist frowns on higher taxes. According to a recent survey made by the American Institute of Public Opinion, under the direction of Dr. George Gallup, only 27 per cent of typical car owners would willingly pay one cent per mile to travel on super-toll-highways; only 39 per cent would willingly pay from one half to one cent per mile.

Surveys chart highway needs

Nor is that extra burden necessary. Highway planning surveys now being undertaken in forty-six of the states, in co-operation with the Bureau of Public Roads, afford a very definite basis for evaluating present and future highway needs. For the sake of simplicity, let's consider them solely from the standpoint of traffic volume, ignoring the financial aspects.

Complete traffic counts on all rural highways are now available for ten states: Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Included in this group are representative southern, midwestern agricultural, and industrial states.

Representing a fairly accurate cross section of highway traffic for the country, these counts show that only 2.95 per cent of all rural highways now carry an annual average traffic in excess of 1,000 vehicles per twenty-four-hour day; that only .8 per cent carry an annual average traffic in excess of 2,000 vehicles per day; and that only .28 per cent carry an annual average traffic in excess of 3,000 vehicles per day. Nearly all this rural traffic moves over state highways.

The state highway systems in these states total 97,107 miles, or about 11.3 per cent of the total rural highway mileage. Considering only the state highway systems, about twenty-five per cent of the state high-

ways of the states mentioned now carry traffic volumes indicating the possible need for more than two traffic lanes. This percentage in these states is the equivalent of about 6,500 miles.

Traffic will double by 1960

Mr. Charles F. Kettering, vice-president of General Motors Sales Corporation in charge of research, estimated that by 1960 there will be 42,000,000 motor vehicles in use in the United States, an increase of 50 per cent in the next twenty-two years. At the same time, vehicle usage has been increasing; this annual usage will probably



An ideal two-lane highway—smooth, wide, with good shoulders and sight distance

way mileage now carries an annual average traffic in excess of 1,000 vehicles per day; 6.7 per cent carries an annual average traffic in excess of 2,000 per day; and only 2.3 per cent carries an annual average traffic in excess of 3,000 vehicles per day.

These figures are highly significant in appraising the type of highway improvements the motorist may expect in the future. While definite data are not available at the present time, it safely can be assumed that a properly designed two-lane highway will easily take care of an annual average movement up to 2,000 vehicles per day. Even if maximum traffic is three times the daily average of 2,000, the two-lane highway would not be seriously congested.

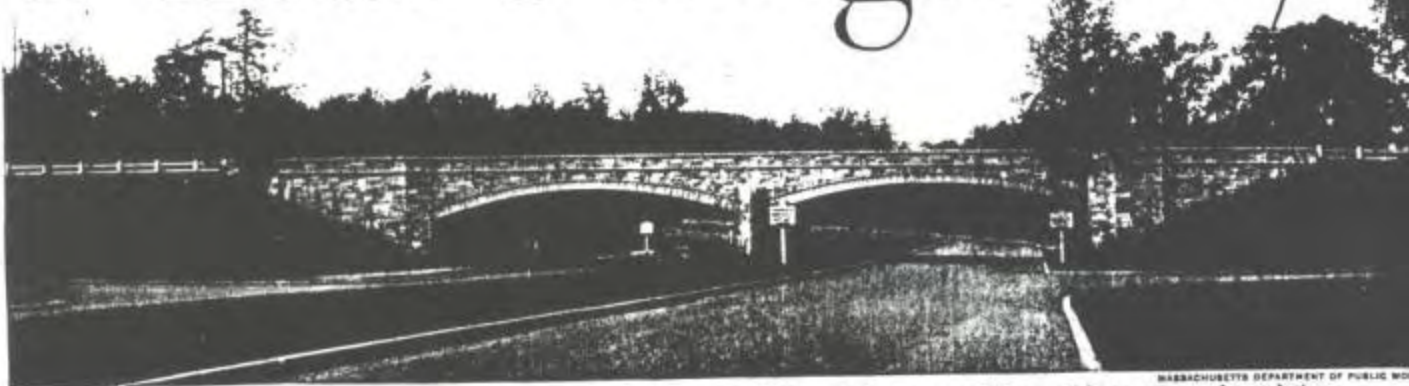
On this very conservative basis of traffic capacity, only 6.7 per cent of the state high-

be increased approximately one third by 1960.

These two factors combined would result in a 100 per cent increase in traffic by 1960. This tremendous increase in usage would probably be confined largely to a limited number of routes. But even if it were spread proportionately over our existing highways not more than 10 to 13 per cent of our state highways in 1960 would require more than two traffic lanes.

Traffic counts in the highway planning surveys show that traffic is predominantly local in nature and of sufficient volume to cause congestion only near large centers of population. Within the zones of influence of these centers of population, expanded highway facilities must be provided to accommodate heavy traffic movements without unnecessary delay. Where population cen-

Future Highway



Grade separations facilitate movement and add to the safety of travel. Many of these are needed around large centers of population.

ters are so close together that their zones of influence essentially overlap, resulting in a heavy interchange of traffic, the continuous improvement of expanded highway facilities is justified. Notable examples where these conditions obtain are between Baltimore and Washington, Chicago and Detroit, Detroit and Toledo, Philadelphia and New York, Boston and Worcester, Chicago and Milwaukee, and several others.

These enlarged highway facilities, in the future, wherever possible, will consist of multilane divided highways in which traffic in opposite directions is separated by a neutral strip, or parkway. To avoid the delays and hazards present at intersecting roads, highway grades will be separated.

Now, since the average motorist must be content with two-lane highways for a long time in the future, let's see what type of highway we're thinking about.

Modernization of two-lane roads

The most that can be expected of a two-lane highway is that it shall have a smooth, dustless, nonskid surface, with ample width of traffic lanes for the speed at which vehicles will use it and that the alignment, grade, and cross section shall provide sufficient clear vision for safe operation on the part of the reasonably careful driver.

Many of our existing highways, with respect to roadway width, alignment, and grade, fail to measure up to these standards because they were built on wagon road beds, long before anyone could foresee the speed factor of modern transportation.

Highway modernization involves principally a general reduction of curvature, flattening of grade, widening of pavement, and an increase of sight distance. The rate of this modernization will be controlled solely by the amount of funds that can be applied to this purpose. Where funds are limited, there is a natural reluctance to abandon or destroy highway facilities before they approach or reach the end of their economic life. And, naturally, this progress

will be confined at first to the main travel routes.

For years to come, many motorists must continue to use sections of highways of narrow width, sharp curvature, and limited sight distance, where the exercise of good judgment on the part of drivers plays a highly important part in safe operation.

Our main trunk-line highways constitute only a relatively small percentage of our state highway systems. When a traveler gets off the main trunk lines, he may encounter roadway surfaces of 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22 feet in width. The older the construction that



Four-lane divided highways like this one may be expected in the future between major cities, but not from coast to coast.

has not been modernized, the narrower the width.

These narrower roads were all right in the horse-and-buggy days; but today it is essential that a two-lane highway be 22 or 24 feet wide. Moreover, these roads must have good shoulders, so that motorists will not be tempted to travel well out in the middle of the highway.

The main drawback of two-lane highways is, of course, the fact that overtaken vehicles can be passed only by utilizing the

traffic lane that may be occupied by opposing traffic. Very few drivers have the faculty of correctly appraising all the elements that enter into a passing maneuver on two-lane highways in the face of opposing high-speed traffic. It is wise, therefore, to play safe and be patient if there is any doubt about your ability to pass the car ahead safely.

Importance of the human element

In motorized highway transportation the fact that must continually be kept in mind is that the actual path of the vehicle is controlled by the driver and therefore may be subject to every possible human reaction. The manufacturers of motorcars have done a wonderful job of making the vehicle quickly responsive to the will of the driver in accelerating, braking, and steering. All that is needed for safe operation is good judgment on the part of the driver.

The careful driver does not need superhighways. As a matter of fact, some authorities, like Professor R. A. Moyer, of Iowa State College, contend that construction of superhighways, with their encouragement of high-speed travel, would be the surest way to increase accidents. Scientific investigations indicate that the majority of motorists are not ordinarily capable of driving safely at speeds in excess of fifty miles per hour—their reactions aren't fast enough.

It follows, therefore, that highway design in the future will be patterned along lines that will afford an ample width of roadway surface for the speed of movement and sufficient clear vision to eliminate the element of surprise and permit the exercise of good judgment on the part of drivers. Where that has been done, highway safety will rest primarily with the individual, except as he may suffer from the mistakes of others.

As I have said in a previous article: I would seem absurd to use the wealth of the nation in building so-called foolproof highways. A much more logical approach to the problem would be to expend the proper amount of effort to keep the fools off them.



"In My Opinion..."

LAMB'S LAWS

By Steve Lamb (#813)

Currently a controversy is boiling between several of my "yuppie" friends and me. It seems that a decade of driving Graphite Gray German Greed Machines has left them unfulfilled and longing for something more: more distinctive; more showy (after all, one hardly even notices a Bimmer or a Benz any more, there are so many of them); more fun; and most important to the Yuppie Friends, more "Investment Potential." These poor soul-less individuals have descended on the old car "market" like a flock of buzzards picking the ripe carcass of a dead mountain lion. They're positively gleeful in their frenzy to "get it all."

These disreputable birds have taken to calling me to ask for advice on what to buy. Now it's true that as a car enthusiast I've guessed with 89% accuracy over the last 10 years as to what would be trendy and expensive; however, I have yet to buy a car for those reasons. I buy old cars because I like them and I want to drive them every day or as often as I can.

You see, I have a strange notion: God led us to invent automobiles so we could drive them. I call this notion Lamb's First Law of Automobiles. My Second Law is very simple: the more a car is driven the more parts it will wear out, and the more parts that are being worn, the more that will be available for that car. (Go to a university and see Market Economics.) This I call the Law of Continuing Resurrection Potential.

My Third Law I owe to — of all people — my university ecology professor: an odd man, he hated cars, but drove a Volvo, the anti-Establishment vehicle of the day. One day Dr. Finken undertook to chastize all of us for driving cars. He maintained that it took 10 years of driving a car to equal the amount of petroleum expended in manufacturing it, and that 25 years of driving were required to equal the environmental harm done in its manufacture. In other words, the worst thing a car does, environmentally speaking, is to come into existence in the first place! I have rolled this startling intelligence into the Third Law, which I've generously named for Dr. Finken. Finken's Law of Increasing Benefit holds that the longer you drive a car, the better for the planet as a whole. So, your 52-year-old 1938 Buick smog-maker, with nary a converter, PCV valve, injector, cannister or such, is actually less polluting than your neighbor's "clean" Japanese machine. Drive that Buick with an air of moral superiority!

My Fourth Law is also very simple: the more enjoyable a car is to drive overall, the more it will be driven. If it is truly a wonderful car, and you can keep it running, it is unlikely that you will part with it. This is Lamb's Law of Perpetual Ownership.

One final principle must be considered. This is the least understood factor in the purchasing of old cars. After the age of 15 years cars stop depreciating, and by the age of 25 they begin to appreciate in value, some of course more than others. This is Lamb's Law of Increasing Return.

This principle is tricky for several reasons.

1. Inflation can create the appearance of great gain with little or no actual increase.
2. Some auctioneers are artificially booming and gusting the market. (See, e.g., '76 Cad Eldorados; '59 Cad convertibles; Ferraris and Loti after the deaths of Enzo and Colin; current Jaguar sports car and '58 Chevy prices.)
3. The more people who "collect" cars as though they are paintings or some other kind of "investment," the harder it is to justify, based on reason, the price fluctuations of old cars.

If you understand all of this, you will understand that the best thing to do with a '38 Buick is to drive it everywhere. If you drive your Buick you will find yourself richer than your friends who drive new cars. Yes, gasoline consumption is higher, but the car doesn't cost thousands of dollars in interest and depreciation every year. The '38 Buick is simple, hardy, and reliable. Mine had at least 230,000 miles on it before I took it in to be rebuilt, and, believe me, I plan on putting that much more on it in the next 20 years, and the same in the 20 after that. When the car's 100 years old I plan on being behind the wheel — daily. Just try that with a BMW, or even a '69 Z-28 Camaro.

Z-28 Camaro? Yep, my yuppie friends are buying them as if it's 1983 and Camaros are Drexel Burnham's latest offering. (As a matter of fact, I hear that Mike Milken is dealing "quality" muscle cars.) These poor wretches are buying cars with 10:1 compression for \$30,000 a piece, plus the cost of the trailers they need to take them to car shows because they're too beautiful to drive and their engines won't run on anything less than aviation fuel. This is not the type of car to own for the future. As time goes on, more and more people will look for old cars to drive. As they do that, what will they turn to? '36-'47 Buicks; '34-'49 Cadillacs; Dodges; Hudsons; '50-'54 Chevrolets; '47-'55 Pontiacs; Kaisers (I admit I like these and may be blind here); maybe even Crosleys if gas gets scarce again. Virtually anything American that handles well and is reliable will be valuable. In the long run, "muscle cars" are not going to be the cars to have.

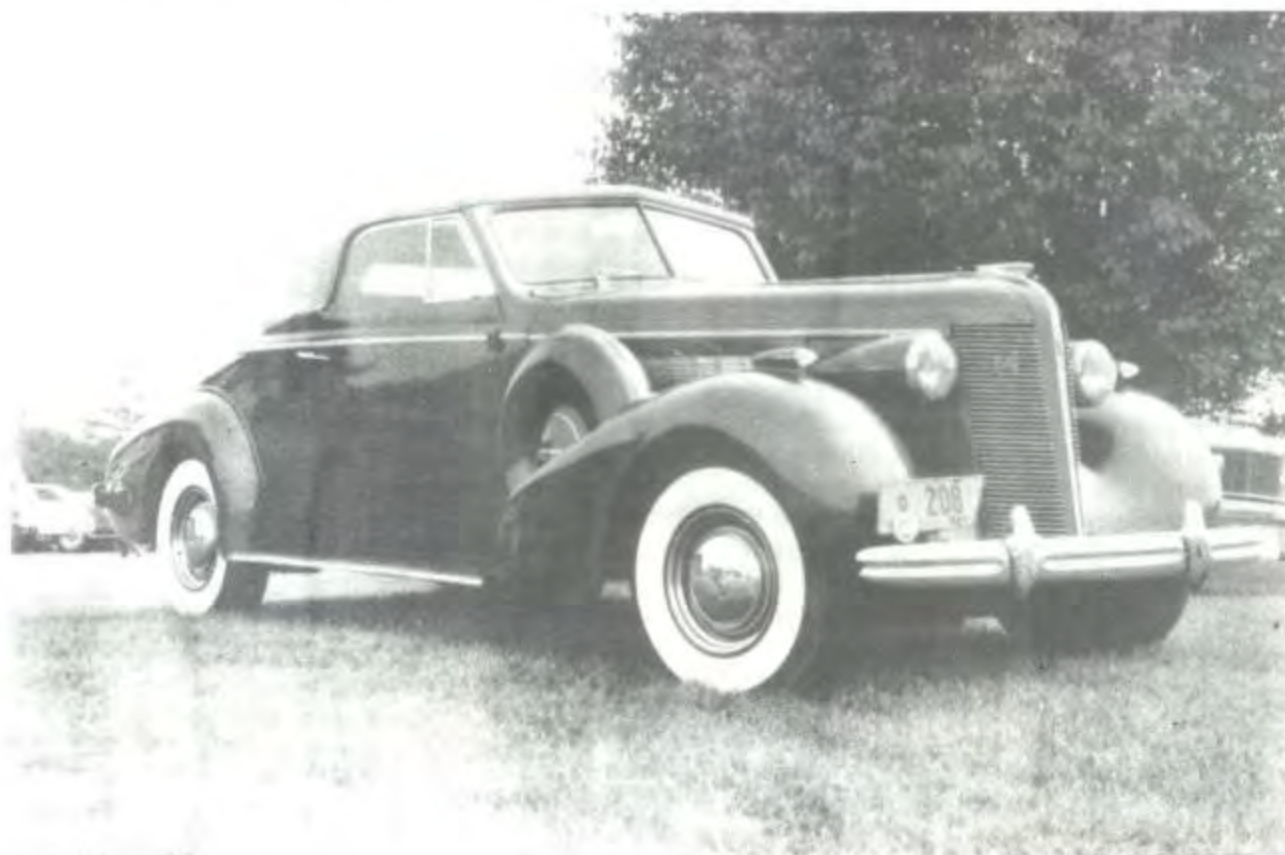
The best advice I can give to people about old cars is this: own and drive what you enjoy, and if you want to "invest" call your broker.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: I thought this was interesting and entertaining, even though I do not agree with all of it. We'll see how Steve does over the next 20 years. At present, I log about 25,000 miles per year in "daily driving," and assuming I continued that for 20 years, my "daily driver" would have accumulated 500,000 miles. If that car were 50+ years old to begin with, long before the end of the 20 years I would have had to contrive a method of duplicating essentially irreplaceable parts, as all the parts cars would have been used up. (Think about flywheel ring gears, to cite just one example.) A lot obviously depends on how much daily driving one does and where one does it, and Steve Lamb, who's happy in California, would probably think twice about taking his '38 out in Winter Wonderland around here. Be all that as it may, however, the great majority of us will use '37s and '38s for occasional recreational purposes only.

I would not be surprised to see greater use of cars from the late 1960s and early 1970s for general transportation, especially by the amateur mechanics. Those cars may use a bit more gas, and some of them are too large to take into the modern city parking garage — at least if one wants to get out of the car after its parked — but their components are understandable and repairable. Lamb's Second Law may well apply to them, even if its applicability to 40 or 50-year-old veterans is questionable.

BCA National Show Shots



1937 Century convertible owned by Randy Dozier (#561); First in Class C-1.



This one caused some problems for the judges: 1938 Century with custom "woody" station wagon body. The owner (unidentified) claimed the car originally had such a body, but could not document that. The present body is newly-made and very interesting.



Rear view of 1938 Special "streamline" sedan owned by O. J. Misjuns (#473); Second in Class C-2.



Lou Wildt's (#245) 1938 Special convertible with spotlight, front bumper badge, "horseshoe" grille guard, and a nice pair of Guide "Super-Ray" lamps.



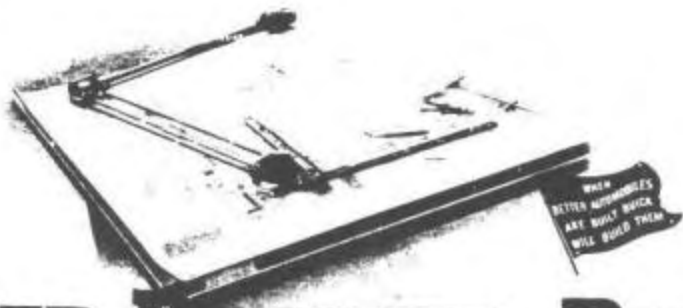
F. H. ("Fizz") Winkoven's (#406) 1938 Special convertible with appropriate Michigan vanity plate.



1938 Limited owned by David Greek (#462).



1935 Special business coupe owned by Dan McLaughlin (#466).



NEVER-FINISHED BUSINESS

TOMORROW morning the man who laid down these drawing tools will pick them up again and keep going on the planning of a better automobile.

The day after that he will do the same, and day upon day after that.

Week after week, month after month, with occasional excursions into the field to see how his ideas are panning out, you'll find him turning ideas into pencil marks that in turn will take form in metal.

For a long time he has served a self-imposed promise.

That is: "When better automobiles are built Buick will build them."

Streaming along in your Buick car, its great engine sighing its contented breath and its wheel guiding you lightly as a mood, you may think that promise has been kept.

But notice that the pledge says *better* automobiles.

Better than what?

Why, better than other cars, of course—better even than Buick's latest and greatest.

That's why the job of Buick's engineers qualifies as never-finished business.

They're not content just to beat the other fellow if there's also a chance to beat themselves.

They're not satisfied to produce the ablest engine in the world if they can make one that's even more powerfully smoothly able.

They're not willing to call it a day when they've got a car that's smooth, and steady, and restful to ride in—if they can brain-sweat out another car that's still smoother, still steadier, still more restful.

Every now and then, of course, they have to say: "Here! This is as far as we can go right now. Build this."

And you can count on it—the car you get will more than likely be a better automobile than you'll get elsewhere at that time.

But the next day you'll find the Buick engineer busy at his board all over again, trying to scratch out a way to go still farther for the future.

That's what's happening now. On the drawing board, in the laboratory, on the test-block, your next car is taking shape.

It won't be here tomorrow. It may take months or years to work out the things these men are daring to dream, to make sure they are trustworthy, serviceable, really worth while.

But you're promised a better automobile when you buy a Buick, and that's what you'll get.

That's what you get today.

It's what you'll get next year or the year after that or whenever you decide to buy again.

We're working to make it *always* true about a Buick that—no matter *when* you buy it—you'll get a better automobile and a better value.



YOUR MONEY GOES FARTHER IN A GENERAL MOTORS CAR



QUESTIONS



ADVICE TO THE NOVICE

This month we again have a number of questions. Two groups were sent in by two of our newer members. These have demonstrated once again that some significant fraction of the membership is lacking in knowledge of elementary subjects, not only respecting authenticity and "correctness" as applied to '37 and '38 Buicks, but also on the design, operation and function of automobiles generally. I cannot get over a certain amount of recurring astonishment about this, although at this point I suppose little or nothing should surprise me. When I first started with antique cars, which was not all that long ago, I was afraid that I would be at the very bottom of the knowledge barrel, totally outclassed by virtually all other participants, most of whom would be master mechanics, operators of sheet metal brakes, etc., etc. As the years have gone by, however, I have discovered that this is not the case, by a long shot.

How does The Torque Tube deal with this? I'm not sure, but I think it clear that this publication does best when it devotes itself to questions of authenticity, to techniques for the restoration or repair of particular components of '37 or '38 Buicks, to sources of supply for particular parts, and the like. That is to say, although a certain amount of theoretical discussion may sometimes be helpful and appropriate, The Torque Tube is not, and cannot be, a basic text on the design and function of automotive systems and parts. Nor is it possible for this or any other publication to do more than suggest, in general terms, possible diagnoses of apparent malfunctions. A physician cannot effectively deal with "I have persistent headaches" without examining the patient; likewise, "Questions" cannot effectively deal with "My car smokes" or "My engine goes thunka-thunka." There are several reasons why engines go "thunka-thunka" and the particular ailing patient must be inspected and tested.

The Editor desires to help the novice; after all, as observed last time, he (or she) presumably needs help the most. However, the best help comes after the reader has investigated the question himself, and cannot find the answer in standard sources or is confused by what he has found. Such investigations tend to sharpen the questions and make them more manageable. Moreover, looking it up for oneself can be an effective and satisfying learning experience. "Standard sources" to my mind, include the 1937 or 1938 Buick Owner's Manuals and Shop Manuals, the Fisher Body Manual, and the Buick Master Chassis and Body Parts Books that cover 1937 and 1938. (The Parts Books may seem formidable, very technical and bewildering, and can be confusing, but are sometimes very helpful once one dopes them out.) Reproductions of all of these can be purchased from Bob's Automobilia and other sources. Every member really should have them. At least half the questions I have received over the past several years could be answered — in many cases very quickly — by looking in the books. There are certain things in the books that are or may be confusing and misleading: for example, to take one item that comes immediately to mind, the "old-style" water pump shown in the 1937 Shop Manual. Virtually all of these pumps were replaced with later ball-bearing pumps and "Questions" can easily dispel confusion about this.

The more specific a question can be made, the easier it is to answer, and the more informative the answer is likely to be. "What is the engine compartment supposed to look like?" is impossible to deal with, and indicates that the questioner has made little

or no effort to find out, or to analyze what it is that he really wants to know. "Does the lettering appear on both sides of the rocker arm cover?" (no: right side only), "Is the intake manifold painted?" (yes, engine green) are, by contrast, easily and effectively answered. At a minimum, when you ask me something, please tell me what year and model car you have (it frequently makes a big difference, and I really should not have to go to the Roster and look it up); it also frequently helps to have the serial (or "frame") number and the engine number. If you want to know about a carburetor, tell me what carburetor it is: I once spent a fair amount of time trying to get through a problem that was easy once I found out the guy's car had a '48 Buick Carter carb on it. Many questions do not include enough information.

I have told a number of people that the best thing they can possibly do, to my mind, is go to Buick Club of America meets, or our own Club meets (when we have them), inspect the cars carefully and thoroughly, photograph them in as much detail as possible, note differences among them, and talk to the owners. Even if you live at a distance from these events, the money spent in travelling to them can be a worthwhile investment. It is difficult for me to remember small details, and sometimes I need to go and look at my own car to find an answer to someone's question. My car, a '37 model 81, is considerably different from, say, a '38 40-series coupe. As I don't have a wide range of models to look at, I often call someone else who has a good example of the car in question. You can do this, too. (Many members do.) Telephone Club members who have cars similar to yours; you will find most of them willing to help you. (Need I add that is one of the chief reasons why the Club Roster is arranged the way it is?)

Be patient. If you are new to antique cars, you cannot learn everything you ought to know in a few months.

I am not saying that you should stop sending in questions. If they become too numerous to deal with (which has not happened yet) I will tell you. I am saying that: (1) self-help is or may be appropriate and effective, and I should be justified in expecting a reasonable level of attempt at it; (2) questions that are vague and general are difficult or impossible to answer effectively; (3) if you know little about cars except how to drive them, I can probably help you to some degree with authenticity or "looks", but you had better find a friend locally who can help you with the "smoke" or "thunka-thunka" problems.

I will conclude this lesson by answering the final question sent in by one of this month's correspondents. He says "...the bottom line question running through my letter is this: just how far should I go to make my car like an original; where do you draw the line on costs, and what areas are important to make original and what areas are less important?" The answer is: I cannot answer this, you must answer it for yourself. The question implies that there is some fixed, universal standard for car restoration, but to my mind there are as many standards as there are restorers. It depends on what you want to end up with, how much money you have to spend, how long you want to take, and what the present condition of the car is. Do you want a show car or a fun car? Do you want to win an AACA Senior or Grand National? If so, a "body-off" restoration with first-class workmanship and attention to detail throughout is probably necessary. Do you want to win a First at a BCA National Meet? If so, not only excellent workmanship but also careful attention to authenticity is called for.

Even when we talk about the winning of prizes, however, and thus about judging, it must be borne in mind that there is no absolute, fixed standard for judging cars, and that the process inevitably involves variability and subjectivity. Both AACA and BCA have tried to make car judging as fair and uniform as possible, but there are necessarily distinct limitations on how close to an ideal the car judging process can come, even if everyone could agree on the ideal. Some judges will deduct one point for non-authentic item, some three, some will miss it altogether. For example, it is now reasonably apparent to me that, at this year's BCA National, '37s were judged somewhat differently and less

harshly than '38s. There was, and is, nothing that I or any of the other supervisory judges could do about this, other than to re-judge all the cars ourselves, a plainly impossible task. The respective two judging teams applied slightly different philosophies, and to the owners this was the luck of the draw. Next year may be better, and will in any event probably be a little different.

How much do you personally value historical accuracy? There are a few things about my own car that I know are not authentic. These would be relatively easy to correct if the car were all in pieces but very difficult to do over with the car assembled. I will probably leave them alone for some time, perhaps for all time, because they look fine and few people know the difference. Some people, however, might be so bothered by this that they would fix the items no matter how much trouble it took. We must also distinguish carefully between originality, in the sense of what the car was in fact when it left the dealer's showroom, and authenticity, in the sense of what it could have been. Some people will insist on having the car exactly as it was: same color, same upholstery fabric, etc. Some will change to a different color or fabric. So long as the different color or fabric is itself reasonably authentic, either approach is to my mind equally valid.

A full-scale, high-quality restoration can be very expensive and time-consuming, and in many cases will result in a car with much more money "invested" in it than it can be sold for. Do you care? How much work can you do yourself? Be realistic about this. It is all too easy to underestimate the time and money and overestimate your abilities and your capacity for staying interested. "Lost interest", "lost storage", "need cash", "partially disassembled" and the like appear all too frequently in "cars for sale" ads. "Amateur restoration" in an ad is to me the kiss of death: it usually means botched in some major respect. Avoid botching. If you doubt your abilities and knowledge, and the car can be used with some relatively minor cosmetic and mechanical work, perhaps you should leave it at that until you've enhanced your levels of experience and knowledge, or your bank account.

Many people really have no fixed and firm idea about where they want to go with a car project. They go along from one thing to another, and find half-way through they wish they'd done something differently along the way. (I did this myself.) Most people say "I really don't want a show car, I just want to have some fun," and that is fine, but they later decide that a car that is deficient in some major respects is not as much fun as they'd hoped. Some of the "fun car" people put their cars in shows anyway, and then are annoyed when the judges look underneath and take points off for rusty frames.

All of the foregoing should be food for thought. I suggest to all of you that for every hour spent actually working on a car, there should be at least one hour spent in planning, analysis, research, observation or discussion. IBM used to give away signs. We've all seen them. They said "THINK." Put one up in your garage.

Now to our first group of questions.



QUESTION. What front end component is at fault causing violent shaking after hitting a pothole or bump?

ANSWER. If you mean violent shaking as I understand shaking, it is probable that your kingpins and most or all of the other "pins" or shafts (upper outer; lower outer; lower inner)

and their bushings are badly worn. It might, however, be something else. In any event, this is the type of question that cannot be answered accurately without inspecting the car, and it is suggested that you have it checked by a mechanic who knows something about front ends. If you mean bouncing up and down, your front shock absorbers are worn out and must be rebuilt.

QUESTION. My car has developed a recent problem following replacement of the generator, voltage regulator and battery. Starting is OK at first, but starting after the engine is hot is risky; it acts like the battery is weak.

ANSWER. There may be a connection between the work that was done and the current problem, but they may be coincidental. Assuming the car did not behave that way before the work was done, and other conditions are about the same, I would check for a poor battery ground. The battery ground cable must be clean and tight on both ends and make good clean bare-metal contact with the frame. Another common cause of this problem is incorrect ignition timing. When engines are very hot, they are harder to turn over, and your problem could be due in whole or in part simply to hot weather.

QUESTION. (1) Moving the steering wheel a quarter turn in either direction produces a little "click" which can be heard and felt through the steering column. Is the problem in the steering box? (2) My horns work properly when the car is at rest but do not make proper contact while moving or turning the wheel. Is the mis-contact at the horn button or at the connector on the steering column under the hood?

ANSWER. These conditions may be related, and thus I have grouped them together: the "click" may come out of the horn wire connector, and I would look at that first. However, there are other possible explanations, and this is another example of the kind of question that cannot be answered without inspecting the car. If the front end of the car is as worn as appears from your first question, it is certainly not unlikely there are badly worn parts in the steering box and linkage as well.

QUESTION. Is there any welding or bonding method to repair the broken chrome trim on my parking light housing?

ANSWER. It depends upon how bad the damage is, but the big firms that specialize in chrome work for antique cars can generally weld these parts. Welding small pot metal parts is a job for a specialist, and can be expensive.

QUESTION. What is the correct paint job for the leading edge of the hood louver on a '38 Special? Does the color of the "Special" match the wheel rims and is the script painted inside the letters or around the model name? What about the '38 "Buick 8" trunk emblem?

ANSWER. Every time I think I've heard 'em all....The indented part of the model name (i.e. "inside the letters") on the hood sides of a '38 is painted red. This has nothing to do with wheel colors, and I wonder where you got that idea. The louvers themselves (other than the stainless trim) are painted metallic silver, as discussed in the last issue. The '38 trunk emblem is chromed; the indented "Buick 8" is red.

QUESTION. My old wheel rims have triple white pinstripes on black hubs. Is that the correct scheme and number of stripes?

ANSWER. I can't really answer this because you did not tell me the color of your car. All but three of the '38 body colors each had two wheel colors that went with it, a "standard"

and an "optional" color. Each wheel color had its own stripe color. In some cases the standard wheel color was the same as the body color, but for some '38 body colors the standard wheel color was different. We have formulas that can be used to duplicate most of the body colors, but the wheel and wheel stripe colors must be guessed at. Do not ask me for formulas for wheel or stripe colors, because I do not have any, and I will throw your letter away. (Two exceptions: "Roi Grey" is Du Pont Metallic Silver — see the last issue; "Pimpernel Scarlet" is a modern Du Pont "fleet color" — 2622.) Also, please note that the above advice does not apply to '37s. Painted wheels on all 1937 cars were the same color as the body. All means all. In other words, there were no optional wheel colors in 1937. There was one optional stripe color in 1937: where "Pimpernel Scarlet" was the standard color, "Carteret Red" could be substituted.

Although we have done so three or four times in the past, I am showing below the Paint Combination Chart for 1937 and 1938, taken from the 1928-1946 Master Body Parts Book. As indicated above, through the work of Lauren Matley (#46) the Club has developed formulas that can be used to duplicate quite accurately most 1937 and 1938 body colors, using modern Du Pont automotive finishes. If you do not have these, send SASE to the Editor.

PAINT COMBINATION CHART

Comb. No.	Year	BODY UPPER PANEL		BODY LOWER PANEL		WHEELS			
		Color	DuPont	Color	DuPont	Color	DuPont	Stripe	DuPont
500	1937	Imperial Black	2422101	Same	.....	Black	2206	Roi Grey	813768
501	1937	Chancellor Blue	2421247	Same	.....	Chancellor Blue	942805	Roi Grey	813768
502	1937	Coronary Green	24251352	Same	.....	Coronary Green	945390	Roi Grey	813768
503	1937	Sandringham Maroon	24450721	Same	.....	Sandringham Maroon	822192	Roi Grey	813768
504	1937	Sudan Blue	20251567	Same	.....	Sudan Blue	823444	Roi Grey	813768
505	1937	Wellington Grey	20251576	Same	.....	Wellington Grey	823491	Pimpernel Scarlet	812622
								(Opt.) Carteret Red	932596
506	1937	Windsor Grey	20251771	Same	.....	Windsor Grey	82X5533	Pimpernel Scarlet	812622
								(Opt.) Carteret Red	932596
507	1937	Ottawa Blue	20252234	Same	.....	Ottawa Blue	823804	Roi Grey	813768
508	1937	Samarra Beige	20252304	Same	.....	Samarra Beige	823803	Pimpernel Scarlet	812622
								(Opt.) Carteret Red	932596
509	1937	Bengal Brown	2026525	Same	.....	Bengal Brown	823802	Pimpernel Scarlet	812622
								(Opt.) Carteret Red	932596
510	1937	Hampton Grey	20251065	Same	.....	Hampton Grey	182-3495	Carteret Red	932596
511	1937	Balmoral Green	20251872	Same	.....	Balmoral Green	82-20072	Medium Cream	931005
512	1937	Hampton Grey	20252687	Same	.....	Hampton Grey	182-20205	Carteret Red	932596
<hr/>									
515	1938	Rembrandt Black	242-2122	Same	.....	Black	2206	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Dante Red	82-20383	Silver	289-42
516	1938	Gainsborough Blue	242-51995	Same	.....	Gainsborough Blue	94-20329	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Dante Red	82-20383	Silver	289-42
517	1938	Van Gogh Green	242-51252	Same	.....	Van Gogh Green	94-3390	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Sevenjay Green	94-20118	Silver (Outer)	289-42
								Yellow (Center)	289-52
518	1938	Titian Maroon	242-52338	Same	.....	Titian Maroon	94-20361	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Dante Red	82-20383	Silver	289-42
519	1938	Botticelli Blue	202-51567	Same	.....	Botticelli Blue	82-3444	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Dante Red	82-20383	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Vincennes Red	82-20522	Cream	289-52
520	1938	Whistler Grey	202-51576	Same	.....	Whistler Grey	82-3491	Carteret Red	289-50
						(Opt.) Dante Red	82-20383	Silver	289-42
521	1938	Homer Grey	202-32187	Same	.....	Stanhope Blue	94-20331	Silver	289-42
522	1938	Corot Beige	242-8846	Same	.....	Bugatti Red	94-20265	Silver	289-42
523	1938	Van Dyck Brown	202-52553	Same	.....	Van Dyck Brown	182-20330	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Ormond Tan	94-3970	Cream	289-52
						(Opt.) Vincennes Red	82-20522	Cream	289-52
524	1938	Raphael Green	202-52573	Same	.....	Sevenjay Green	94-20118	Silver (Outer)	289-42
								Yellow (Center)	289-52
525	1938	Ce'Zanne Beige	202-53007	Same	.....	Ce'Zanne Beige	182-20595	Silver	289-42
						(Opt.) Bugatti Red	94-20265	Silver	289-42



The following questions come from another member who joined us very recently.

QUESTION. My car has been painted before and I can't tell the original color. The firewall plate says Paint...505 and Trim...323. Can you tell me what these colors are? How do I get the correct paint? Is the mixture I could obtain locally good enough? Is it OK to use modern paint if the color is correct? What is painted with the "trim" paint?

ANSWER. Let me begin with your biggest error. "Trim" does not mean paint; it means upholstery fabric. Trim no. 323 was Tan Bedford Cord. Upholstery fabrics are discussed in answer to your third question below. You will see from the preceding Q and A material that 1937 paint 505 was "Wellington Grey." If you go to an auto paint dealer and ask for 1937 Buick Wellington Grey, or 1937 Buick 505, or Duco 20251576, you will get a blank stare; these names and numbers mean nothing today. If, however, you take the Club formulas to a Du Pont dealer, he can translate them into either acrylic lacquer or acrylic enamel. (Unfortunately, in a few cases we do not have a formula, and Wellington Grey is one of them; it can be matched only in enamel.) In my opinion, it is not only OK to use modern paint, it is highly desirable, if not essential. Some restorers use nitrocellulose lacquer, because that was the type of paint used in the 1930s, and they believe this is "authentic." In my judgement, this is foolishness. Modern paint is much better, and I defy anyone to tell the difference in appearance. Most restorers use lacquer on the main body of the car, and enamel on the firewall, door frames, fender and tail lamps, and wheels. This is because enamel is less easily chipped or scratched, but lacquer is easier to work with and easier to spot repair if one gets a dent or ding. However, some people have painted entire cars with enamel and like the result. (One member at least has even used IMRON, a polyurethane enamel.) The experienced eye can generally tell the difference between lacquer and enamel finishes, and I prefer lacquer because enamel does not "look right" to me on the body panels of a 1930s car. Others, however, might dispute this. (In the Paint Chart reproduced above, "DUCO" is Du Pont nitrocellulose lacquer, and "DULUX" is Du Pont alkyd enamel. Du Pont paints were used exclusively on General Motors cars in the 1930s. In fact, GM owned a big piece of Du Pont at that time; eventually GM was required to divest this stock by Uncle Sammy's trust-busters.)

It may be observed here that there is nothing in the Ten Commandments, or the United States Code Annotated, or any lex scripta or non scripta that requires one to use exact matches of 1937 or 1938 Buick colors when repainting a 1937 or 1938 Buick, or to paint a car the color it was originally. If you don't like black, say, choose something else. Cars could be ordered from the factory with "special paint", which included in all likelihood any GM color then available. However, in my judgment, one should keep within the range of "period" shades: red, say, or metallic powder blue announce "street rod", and unless street rod is what you have, such modern shades should be avoided. Many modern metallic paints tend to have much more "flake" material in them than the 1930s metallics, and even if the color is appropriate the "look" may not be if such paints are used. (The Matley formulas take account of this.) Moreover, and again in my judgment, one should use a color appropriate to the style and look of the car. Samarra Beige or Ottawa Blue would be fine for the sporty look of a Roadmaster convertible sedan, but on a closed Roadmaster or Limited would to my eye look all wrong. The Buick Club of America judging form requires a heavy mandatory deduction for "non-authentic color", but that does not mean that the judges will nail you if you are not right on target with an exact match of a '37 or '38 "factory" color. It does mean that you will get nailed for an "out of period" color.

QUESTION. I have been told 1937 steering wheels should be done in a tannish color. Was there only one color?

ANSWER. The rims of all 1937 "flexible" or "banjo" wheels were plastic. I would call the color "cream." There are often variations in the colors of restored steering wheels and reproduction interior plastic knobs and sometimes it is difficult to get all one's interior plastic exactly the same color. All 1937 plastic wheel rims were done in the "cream" color. The plain hard rubber wheels found on some cars (largely business coupes) were brown.

QUESTION. The original seats of my '37 Limited appear to have been a brown or chocolate color corduroy. The floor appears not to have been carpeted but to have some form-fitted floor boards with mohair tacked around them. Does all of this sound correct?

ANSWER. No. Let us start with the floor. I imagine you are looking at the plywood floor panels ('37 80 and 90 series cars did not have all-steel bodies), and the original carpet of your car is long gone. (I'm not sure what the "mohair" is; are you sure it's not jute padding?) The rear compartment floor of your car should be carpeted. The correct front floor treatment for 80 and 90 series cars remains somewhat mysterious. Most restorers use carpet here also, with or without a rubber insert under the pedals. This is acceptable in my opinion, except for cars that were intended to be chauffeur-driven (90-L; 91-F; 81-F); in these the front compartment should have the brown rubber mat used in 40 and 60 series cars. (Not everyone would agree with this.) As indicated above, the original interior fabric of your car was tan bedford cord. Bedford cord was a ribbed wool fabric, but I would not call it "corduroy" in the sense of the ribbed cotton fabric used to make — for example — casual trousers. If the original interior remains in your car, you are not describing it very well, and it has changed color. No matter. Fabrics in 1937 80 and 90 series cars were tan or gray bedford cord, or tan or gray broadcloth. Several variations of each were used. Get your upholstery shop to obtain as many tan and gray broadcloth and bedford cord samples as they can, and pick one that appeals to you. Or get some samples yourself. Perhaps the best-known fabric supplier for antique cars is Le Baron Bonney (6 Chestnut St., Amesbury, MA 01913. 508/388-3811), but there are several others. Striped fabrics were used, and are acceptable if conservative. The headliner (i.e. the interior roof covering) should be mohair. The color of headliner, "windlace" (the stuff that goes around doors, etc.), robe cord, visors, etc. should match the seat and door panel material. (An exception to this is a few of the special cloth and leather combination interiors used in 1938.)

QUESTION. Is it true that most of the engine and interior parts were identical in other GM cars like Cadillacs and Chevys?

ANSWER. No. There is so little interchangeability among Buick and other makes that it is not worth being concerned about. That is not to say that there may not be some things that will fit and work. If you have no interior door handle, for example, and you discover that a Pontiac handle fits and allows you to open the door, use it til you find the right one. As far as engine parts are concerned, if one considers that the Buick straight 8s were the only overhead-valve in-line eight-cylinder engines GM ever made, the question is answered.



Here is our last question. This one comes from an experienced, long-time member (David Bylsma (#117)).

QUESTION. As everyone knows, it is very hard to find a NOS or good used hand brake cable. The hardest cable to find for a '38 is the one running from one rear wheel to the other. I have an old cable. The cable itself is no good, but all of the attached hardware is OK. Does anyone know where I can get a new cable put on to my old hardware, or how I can put the lead stop on the end of the cable? (Or is it lead?)

ANSWER. I have seen ads in Hemmings by someone who says he has a large stock of older "after-market" cables. Dave Lewis remembers a vendor at Hershey last year who had hundreds of such cables. It's probably the same guy, but we can't recall his name. Another approach might be to inquire at your local general aviation airport. Similar cables find wide use in small planes, and you may be able to locate someone who has the facilities to make or repair them. Can someone give David better advice?



TECHNICAL TIPS



MODERN BRAKE PARTS - II

I knew there were some modern brake parts that would work on 80 and 90 series cars when I wrote the entry in the last issue, but I could not find the info. Thanks to Bob Mulcahy (#731), we have the following:

80 - 90 Series - Wheel Cylinder Kits

Front - Raybestos/Manhattan Wk 54

Rear - Raybestos/Manhattan Wk 237

Bob says these worked perfectly on his '38 Roadmaster. There seems no reason why they would not work as well on 1937 cars, as the sizes are the same for both years. (The front cylinders for both years are the same; '37s have a left and a right rear cylinder; '38s have the same rear cylinder for both sides.)





PARTS EXCHANGE



PARTS FOR SALE

BUICK STANDARD TRANSMISSION GASKET KIT. All gaskets and seals needed when rebuilding or resealing your transmission. Will fit 1937-1938 all series. \$16.95 postpaid (N.J. residents add 6% sales tax.) Send check or money order with name and address; year and series of car.

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NEW DASH PANEL DECALS for 1937 80-90 series cars.
Kit includes: 1 practice decal 7"x14"; 2 12"x14" decal sheets;
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616/396-3183
616/392-1761

1938 Parts: Rebuilt pressure plate, ser 60, 80, 90- \$65; new clutch disk, ser. 60, 80, 90- \$35; starter with solenoid (very good), ser. 60, 80, 90- \$100; radiator, ser. 60, 80, 90, cleaned out & tested- \$225; parking light parts- make offer; tail lights (complete w/lens base & lens retainer)- \$75; horn button- \$25; headlight switch knob (good)- \$10; Cigar lighter-dash (plastic is good)- \$20. Call DAVID BYLSMA (#117) in Maryland, 5 PM to 9 PM Mon.-Fri. or anytime Sat. & Sun. Eastern Time. 301/551-7236.

1937 Special sidemount fenders, never wrecked or rusted. Trade for '37 Or '38 Century in equal condition. JOE GIORDANO (#333). 131 N. Stewart Rd., Liberty, MO 64068. 816/781-5570.

1 set front fenders, '38 40 series; 1 left front fender, '37 40 series; 1 set back fenders, '38 40 series; 1 bare '37 40 series frame; 2 deck lids; other parts. JOE BUSBY (#846). 7359 W 100 N, Anderson, IN 46011. 317/534-5118.

1937 80 Series Parts for Sale

Interior Garnish Molding-all except rear quarter windows	\$ 100.00
Front & Rear Window Vents (4)	60.00
Steering wheel - no ring	35.00
Accelerator Pedal Mechanism(Mounts on firewall to Starterator	20.00
Brake & Clutch Pedal Assembly	35.00
Master Brake Cylinder	35.00
Transmission Floor Cover w/pedal	30.00

Radio Grill - Chrome	20.00
Radio w/ Speaker	70.00
Center Windshield Divider	25.00
Rear Passenger Dome Light	15.00
Horns (2)	35.00
Front Fender Support Brackets (2)	40.00
Dash Guages - all except Temperature	

Exterior Trim, 2 Rims, suspension parts, and chassis available at a later date.

1937 Special Parts for Sale

Front & Rear Bumper Brackets	\$ 50.00 pr.
Front Fender Support Brackets	40.00
Rear Fender Splash Guards	40.00
Running Board Brackets (4)	50.00
Trunk Light Assembly	25.00
Tail Lights (one lens)	25.00
Front Parking Light (1)	10.00
Cowl Vent	20.00
Ash Tray	5.00
Rear View Mirror	20.00

Doors, Hood, Trunk, and rebuilt motor available.

PLEASE WRITE FOR NEEDS. I AM OUT OF TOWN A LOT IN THE SUMMER AND MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE TO BE REACHED BY PHONE.

Tom Alderink
619 W. 23rd Street
Holland, MI. 49423

PARTS WANTED

1938 series 40: standard transmission; bell housing; drive shaft; torque tube. VERN SOELDNER (#788). R#2-Box 151, Colfax, WI 54730. 715/962-4255.

'37-'38 opera coupe jump seat trays. These two 16"x20"x4" metal trays hold the two jump seats. HARRY LOGAN (#651). 1005 Rilma Lane, Los Altos, CA 94022. 415/941-4587.

1937 Century NOS or excellent used both front fenders, plain or sidemount; Harrison radiator No. 3107739; both running boards with excellent metal, rubber doesn't matter; rumble seat bumper step plate & bracket in any condition. Parts for trade--see Parts for Sale. JOE GIORDANO (#333). 131 N. Stewart Rd., Liberty, MO 64068. 816/781-5570.

CARS FOR SALE

A friend of mine in Michigan, Del Cutter, has a '37 model 47 (plain-back sedan) that he wants to sell. Del says the car is reasonably solid and all there, and ran when he stored it a few years ago. He is asking \$1000. Contact Del Cutter, 5259 Durwood Dr., Swartz Creek, MI 48473.

NEW MEMBERS

William F. Mack (#839)
69 Thomas St.
Woonsocket, RI 02985
401/762-1839
'38 41

Dale E. Crist (#840)
303 N. Athletic St.
White Pigeon, MI 49099
616/483-9175
'38 41

Warren Berto (#841)
615 S. 4th St.
Dayton, WA 99328
509/382-3168
'38 40

Allen B. Colley (#842)
39 Mistletoe Dr.
Covington, LA 70433
504/893-4524
'38 67

James Varga (#844)
14577 Whitney Rd.
Strongsville, OH 44136
216/238-7923
'37 80-C

Alexander Wislow (#844)
200 S. Prospect
Park Ridge, IL 60068
708/698-3168
'38 40

Oneil Canteay (#845)
6520 E. Hampton Dr.
Indianapolis, IN 46226
317/547-1870
'37 61

Joe Busby (#846)
7359 W. 100 N.
Anderson, IN 46011
317/534-5118
'37 41

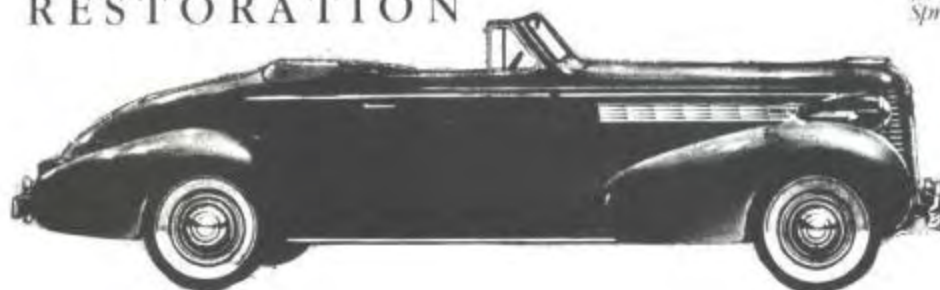
Dwight Hylton (#847)
2346 W. Jewett St.
San Diego, CA 92111
619/576-9020
'38 40

Robert P. Sawyer, Jr. (#848)
HCR 60- Box 97
Gouldsboro, ME 04607
207/963-2945
'37 41 '37 48

John Harter (#849)
31696 Avenida Evita
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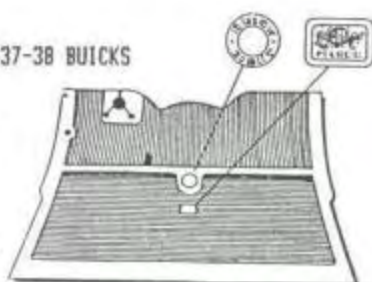
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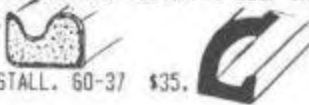
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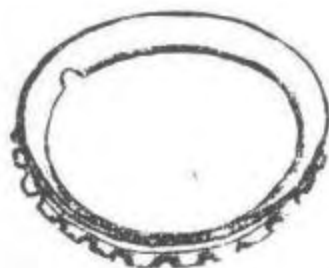
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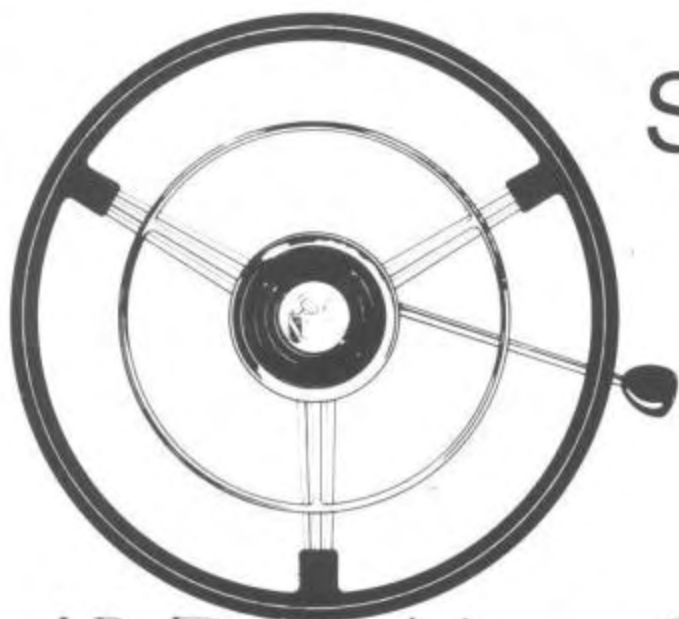
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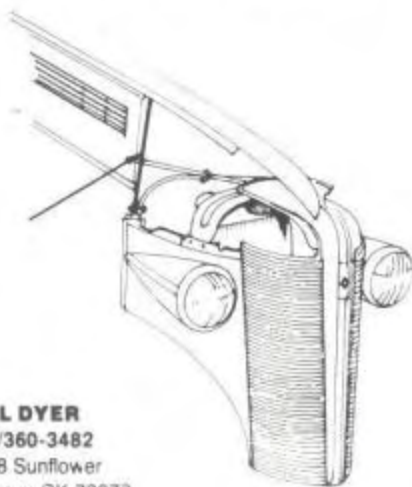
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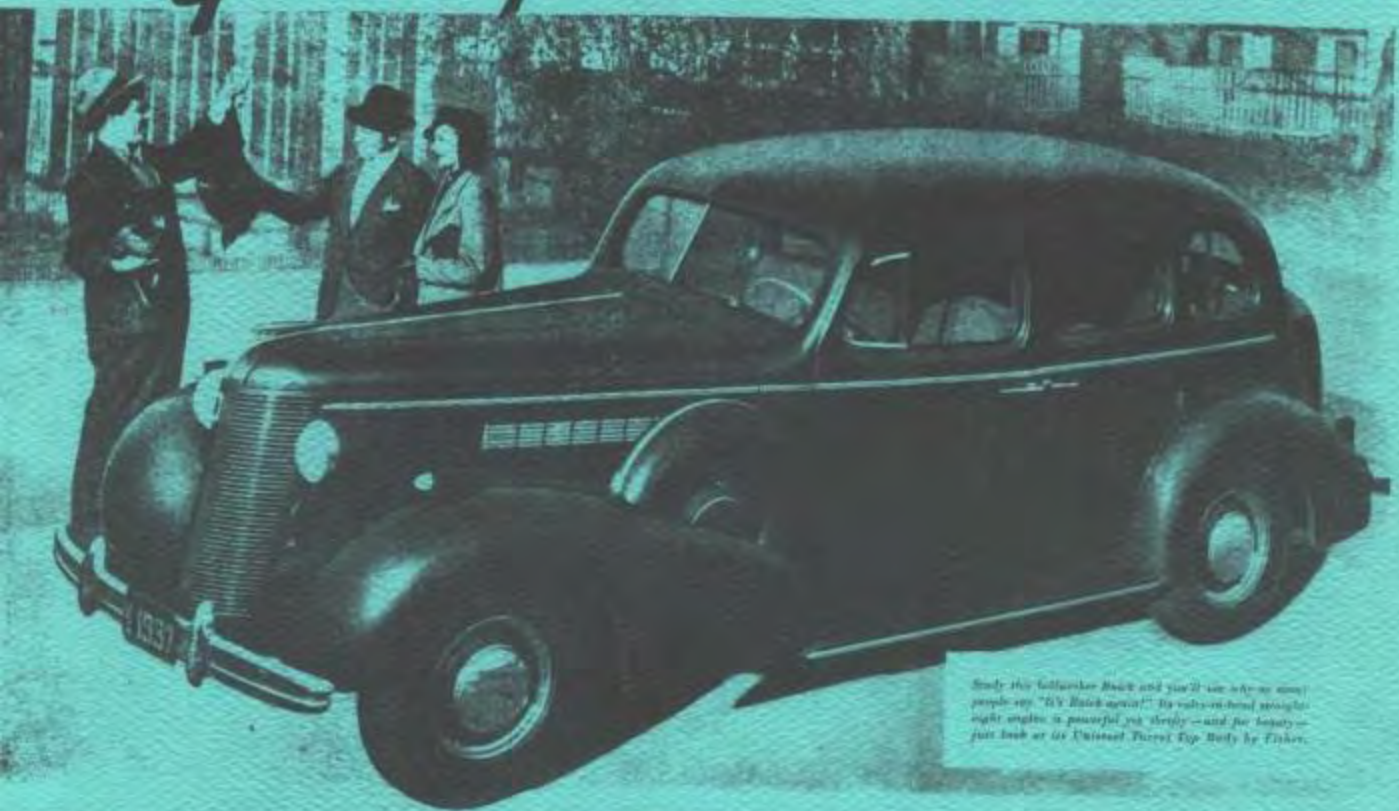
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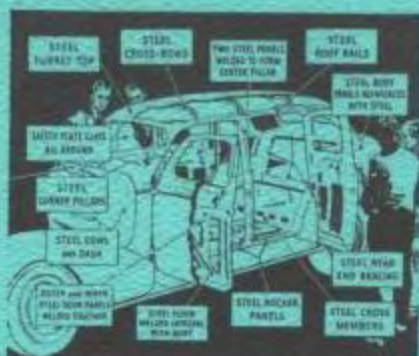
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